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RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

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RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 1106

RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 3119

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000385

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KPAL](#) [PTER](#) [KU](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: GOK TO A/S WELCH: "OUR AID IS ADEQUATE, BUT WE'LL GIVE MORE IF NECESSARY"

Classified By: CDA Misenheimer for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On April 2, NEA A/S Welch met separately with the Kuwaiti Crown Prince, Prime Minister and Economic Advisor to the Amir to discuss Israel/Palestinians, Iraq, Syria/Lebanon, and Iran. A/S Welch pressed all three contacts to enhance Kuwait's political and financial support for President Abbas and the Palestinian Authority. The GOK called for more transparency in Israeli/Palestinian peace negotiations, a lifting of Israel's blockade of Gaza and an end to Hamas rocket attacks against Israel. The GOK reiterated its support for Palestinian and Iraqi humanitarian relief efforts and urged the USG to speak to the Israeli Government in defense of Christian and Muslim rights to live in Jerusalem. On Iraq, the PM was unusually supportive of PM Maliki and said the GOK "talks to him regularly." Separately, the GOK expressed its disappointment in the behavior of Bashar Al-Assad and complained that Tehran was attempting to force Kuwait into a dependence on Iranian water. End summary.

Meeting Participants

¶2. (C) On April 2, NEA A/S Welch met with Kuwaiti Crown Prince Shaykh Nawaf Al Sabah, Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Al Sabah and Amiri Economic Advisor Dr. Yousef El-Ebraheem to discuss Israel/Palestinians, Iraq, Syria/Lebanon, and Iran, as well as Iraqi PM Nouri Al-Maliki's recent action against Shi'a militias (reported septel).

Israel/Palestine Negotiations: "Let the World Know"

¶3. (C) A/S Welch began by updating the Crown Prince (CP) on peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), and highlighted some of the progress being made. Shaykh Nawaf questioned the secret nature of these discussions and encouraged the USG to inform the world of any positive developments. The CP praised the Bush Administration's two-state solution, but complained about its perceived lack of progress. He called for Israel to lift its blockade of Gaza, and said that Hamas should stop rocket attacks against Israel.

¶4. (C) A/S Welch urged the GOK to increase its political and financial support for the PA. Shaykh Nawaf said that Kuwait "never hesitates" to do its part for the Palestinians and added that the Amir regularly discusses Palestinian aid with

other heads of state, including (a very reluctant) Ahmedinejad. A/S Welch noted, however, that Ahmedinejad was not reluctant to smuggle weapons to the Palestinians through Egypt. Shaykh Nawaf responded that the GOE had proven unable to stop this.

¶ 15. (C) The Prime Minister (PM) urged the USG to speak to the Israeli Government in defense of Christian and Muslim rights to live in Jerusalem. He speculated that involving Israeli Arabs in the governance of Jerusalem might help solve some of its problems. The PM observed, however, that the location of the Wailing Wall and its religious importance to the Jewish community would continue to obstruct peace efforts among the three faiths.

¶ 16. (C) The PM welcomed continued U.S. high-level engagement with the GOK and the USG's broader peace initiatives in the region. He questioned, however, whether the Israeli government really desired peace. A/S Welch assured the PM that the Israelis do indeed want peace, but explained that they are very concerned about regional instability. A/S Welch urged the GOK to act now in support of the PA, both politically and financially, and to encourage its Arab neighbors to do the same. Shaykh Nasser said, "We have fulfilled our obligations to the Palestinians, but for further humanitarian needs, we will not hesitate to provide aid." The Crown Prince added that the GOK had experienced difficulties in assisting the PA in the past because of financial transfer delays at Israeli banks.

Iraq: Iraq Needs a Marshall Plan

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¶ 17. (C) A/S Welch called for the Arab world to embrace Iraq as a brother and stressed that Ahmedinejad should not be the only regional head of state to visit Baghdad. Shaykh Nasser said that Kuwait had a very "sensitive" relationship with Iraq and added that this relationship is currently largely humanitarian in nature. He explained that Kuwaiti aid is transferred from the Red Crescent Society through the Humanitarian Operations Center (currently headed by Ali Al-Mu'min, Kuwait's Ambassador-designate to Iraq). Shaykh Nasser lamented, though, that in terms of getting aid to Iraq, "nobody wants to go, even the Iranians." He added that the GOK is "doing what it should do" and that the Iraqis are "happy" with the level of Kuwaiti aid. Shaykh Nasser was unusually positive in his comments on Iraqi PM Maliki, however. He said, "We support Maliki," and asserted that the GOK "talks to him regularly."

¶ 18. (C) Yousef El-Ebraheem suggested that southern Iraq requires its own Marshall Plan to foster economic development, job creation, and political stability. He said the 2009 Arab Economic Summit, which Kuwait will host, would be an appropriate forum to discuss this. Concerning Kuwaiti foreign development assistance for Iraq, El-Ebraheem cited factionalism and poor ministerial coordination as factors contributing to Kuwait's modest disbursements thus far. He said the GOI needs to make it easier for Iraq's neighbors to provide foreign assistance for development projects by streamlining its bureaucracy, clearly defining ministerial roles and responsibilities, and creating mechanisms to enable effective project contracting. (Note: Kuwait has disbursed only USD 21 million of the USD 575 million it has pledged to Iraq thus far. End note.)

Syria/Lebanon: Errant Asad continues to Insult Fellow Arabs

¶ 19. (C) A/S Welch updated Shaykh Nawaf on the aftermath of the Arab League Summit and the current situation in Lebanon. In reply, the CP said that the GOK is in constant communication with PM Siniora and is providing "all the support that we can give." Shaykh Nasser observed that the leaders of Kuwait,

Saudi Arabia and Egypt are all fathers to President Bashar Al-Asad, while the leaders of Morocco and Jordan are his brothers. According to the PM, Asad's Arab "family" is extremely disappointed with his behavior and non-compliance with their wishes.

Iran

¶ 10. (C) The PM inquired about USG dealings with Iran. He commented that Kuwait has a good relationship with the GOI, and said that "We deal with Iran in a respectable and frank way." He added that the GOK regularly encourages the Iranians to allow greater IAEA access to their nuclear facilities. He also said the GOK had advised the Iranians to accept nuclear material from the Russians and not to trust Iranian technology in its pursuit of nuclear energy. Nevertheless, Shaykh Nasser complained about Iran's attempts to strong-arm Kuwait into importing more of its water in order to increase Kuwaiti dependence on Iran.

¶ 11. (U) A/S Welch cleared this cable.

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Misenheimer